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Message Text

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11
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SAJ-01 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 OMB-01

DRC-01 /154 W
---------- 129846
R 140715Z DEC 73
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8996
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 12575

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, CH, HK
SUBJ: PEKING SMILES BENEVOLENTLY AT HONG KONG

SUMMARY: PEKING APPEARS TO BE MAKING A CONCERTED EFFORT TO FURTHER POLISH ITS IMAGE IN HONG KONG AND TO DEMONSTRATE A CO-OPERATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES HERE. IN THE SHORT-TERM, THIS DISPLAY OF REASONABLENESS MAY BE DESIGNED TO SET THE STAGE FOR PRIME MINISTER HEATH'S VISIT TO CHINA NEXT MONTH AND A RENEWED REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION OF AN OFFICIAL PRC REPRESENTATIVE IN THE COLONY. IN THE LONGER-TERM, THE AS-SISTANCE TO HONG KONG DURING THIS CRITICAL TIME SERVES TO SHOW THAT THE PRC SHARES RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PEOPLE HERE. END SUMMARY.

1. PEKING HAS RECENTLY TAKEN FURTHER STEPS TO EASE THE INFLUX OF IMMIGRANTS INTO HONG KONG, PROVIDED LIMITED AMOUNTS OF FUEL
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TO THE COLONY ON AN URGEN BASIS, AND STEPPED UP THE PACE

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OF CULTURAL AND SPORTS
PRESENTATIONS. THE NUMBER OF LEGAL IMMIGRANTS INTO HONG KONG FROM CHINA HAS DECLINED TO 80-90 PER DAY FOR THE PAST FEW DAYS. BRITISH OFFICIALS TELL US THAT ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE PRC IN AN EFFORT TO REDUCE THE FLOW TO APPROXIMATELY FIFTY PERSONS PER DAY. THEY BELIEVE THAT THOSE PRESENTLY COMING OVER THE BORDER ARE THE BAVTLOG OF PERSONS WHO HAD BEEN GRANTED EXIT PERMITS BEFORE NOVEMBER 1 AND ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT THE ISSUANCE OF NEW EXIT PERMITS WILL BE KEPT AT A QUITE MANAGEABLE LEVEL. THE LARGE INFLUX OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS IS SAID TO STEM BASICALLY FROM "MUDDLED ADMINISTRATION" ON THE PART OF THE PRC AND THE CHINESE ARE SEEN TO HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM "IN THEIR OWN WAY."

2. THE RECENT SALES OF INCREASED AMOUNTS OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS (CHIEFLY LIGHT DIESEL OIL AND KEROSENE) TO HONG KONG FROM THE PRC HAVE RECEIVED FAVORABLE PUBLICITY FAR IN EXCESS OF THE RELATIVELY MODEST AMOUNTS INVOLVED. DURING HIS TWO-DAY STOPOVER HERE ON THE WAY BACK FROM THE PHILIPPINES, CCPIT CHAIRMAN WANG YAO-TING AP-PARENTLXRECEIVED A FULL BRIEFING ON THE MATTER FROM THE FIRMS IN-VOLVED AND THE PRC MAY WELL DECIDE TO TAKE FURTHER STEPS TO HELP HONG KONG THROUGH THE OIL CRISIS. WANG, HOWEVER, DID NOT HOLD TALKS WITH HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WHILE HE WAS IN THE COLONY.

3. ON THE SPORTS AND CULTURAL FRONT, PEKING HAS ALSO GENERATED A FLURRY OF POSITIVE PUBLICITY. A PRC TEAM PARTICIPATING IN AN INTER-NATIONAL BADMINTON EXHIBITION RECEIVED EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY IN BOTH THE HONG KONG AND PRC PRESS. THE KWANGCHOW ACROBATIC TROUPE ARRIVED IN HONG KONG FOLLOWING A TOUR OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND AND HONG KONG GOVERNOR LACLEHOSE ATTENDED THE OPENING PERFORMANCE. (HE WAS ESCORTED BY THE LEADING COMMUNIST OFFICIAL IN HONG KONG MR. LI CHU-SHENG, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE NEW CHINA NEWS AGENCY OFFICE IN HONG KONG.) PEKING HAS ALSO PUBLICLY PRAISED THE HONG KONG REPRE-SENTATIVE TO THE ASIAN GAMES FEDERATION FOR HIS STRONG SUPPORT FOR

THE ADMISSION OF THE PRC AND EXPULSION OF TAIWAN.

4. COMMENT: COMING ON THE HEELS OF TENSION BETWEEN HONG KONG AND THE PRC OVER THE QUESTION OF IMMIGRATION INTO THE COLONY, THESE ACTIVITIES APPEAR TO BE PART OF AN OVERALL EFFORT TO TIDY UP THE PRC'S IMAGE HERE IN ANTICIPATION OF BRITISH PRIME MINISTER HEATH'S
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RJANUARY VISIT TO PEKING. IT IS WIDELY RUMORED THAT THE CHINESE WILL AGAIN RAISE THE ISSUE OF APPOINTING AN OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE COLONY AND SEASONED DIPLOMAT LI CHU-SHENG WOULD BE AN OBVIOUS CHOICE FOR THE POSITION. IN ADDITION, THE PRC'S APPARENT WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST HONG KONG AT A TIME WHEN THE OIL CRISIS HAS PRODUCED CON-SIDERABLE PESSIMISM AND SOME HOARDING DEMONSTRATES A RESPONSIBLE PRC ATTITUDE AND MAY BE INTENDED TO BOOST CONFIDENCE AND STABILITY.
OSBORN

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